

JONATHAN HICKMAN • BRYAN HITCH • ANDREW CURRIE • ALEX SINCLAIR

ULTIMATE INVASION

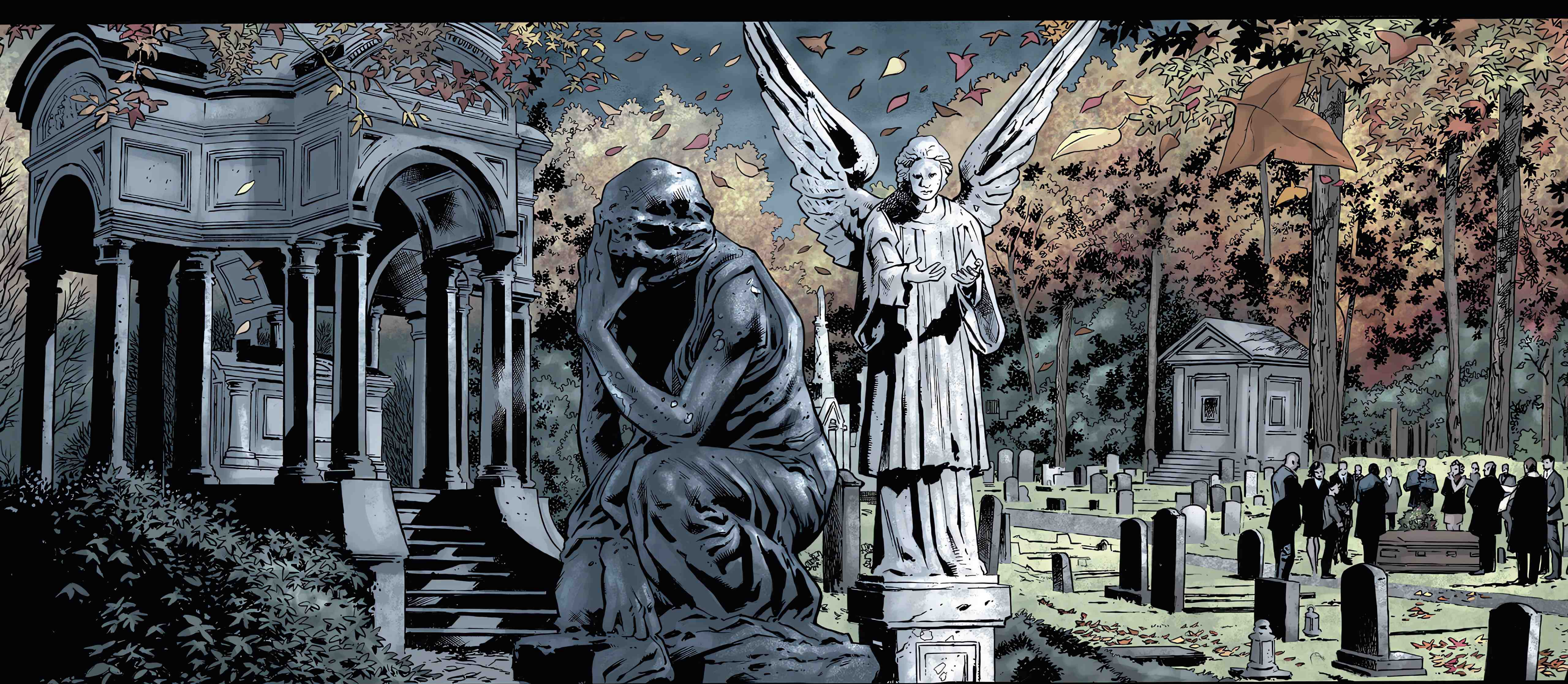


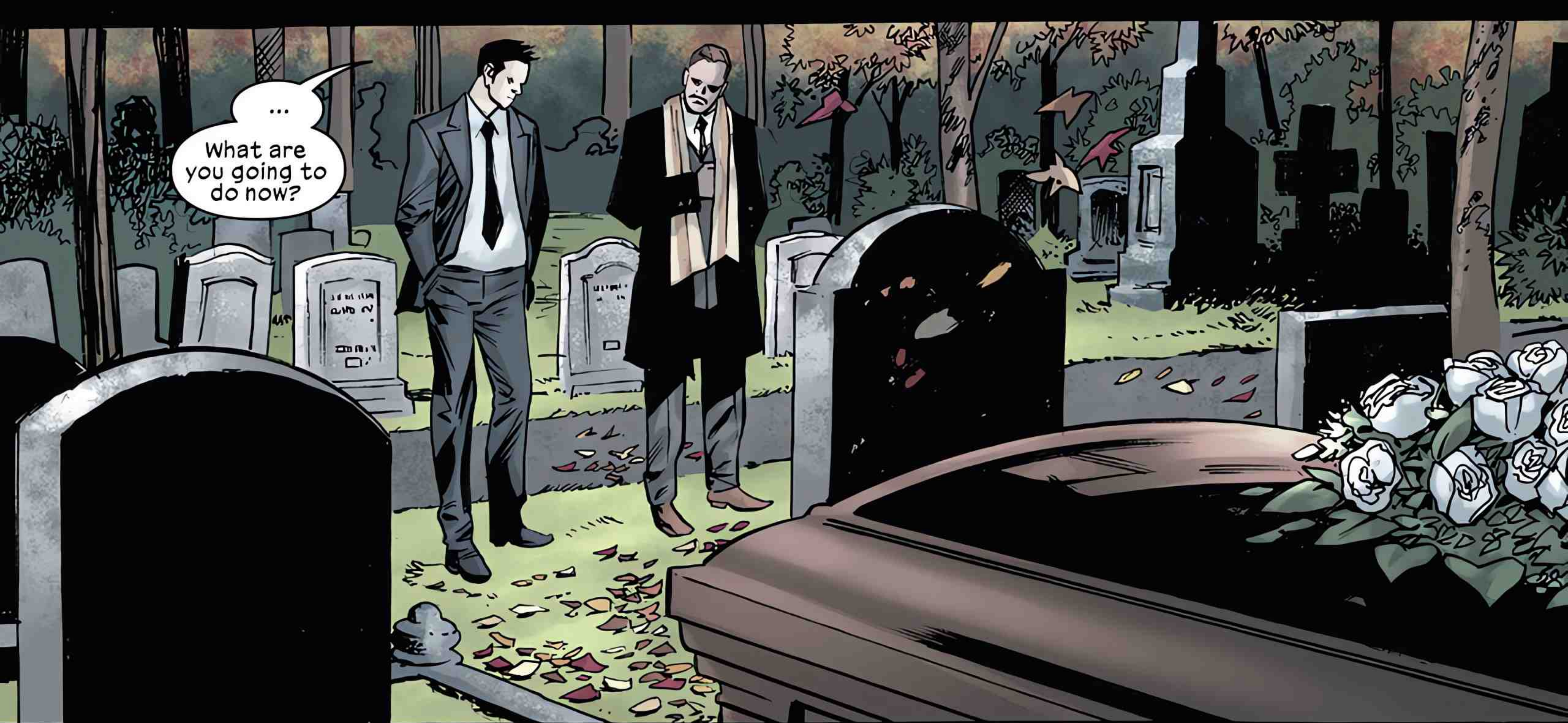
MARVEL

3

The Funeral of
Obadiah Stane.







...
What are you going to do now?



Tony, how would you feel if I told you to pack your bags because we're getting on the plane and running away to live a very quiet, very small, very peaceful life?

Sounds amazing. And I'd love to say yes, but we both know that's not going to happen, is it?



No.
It's not.

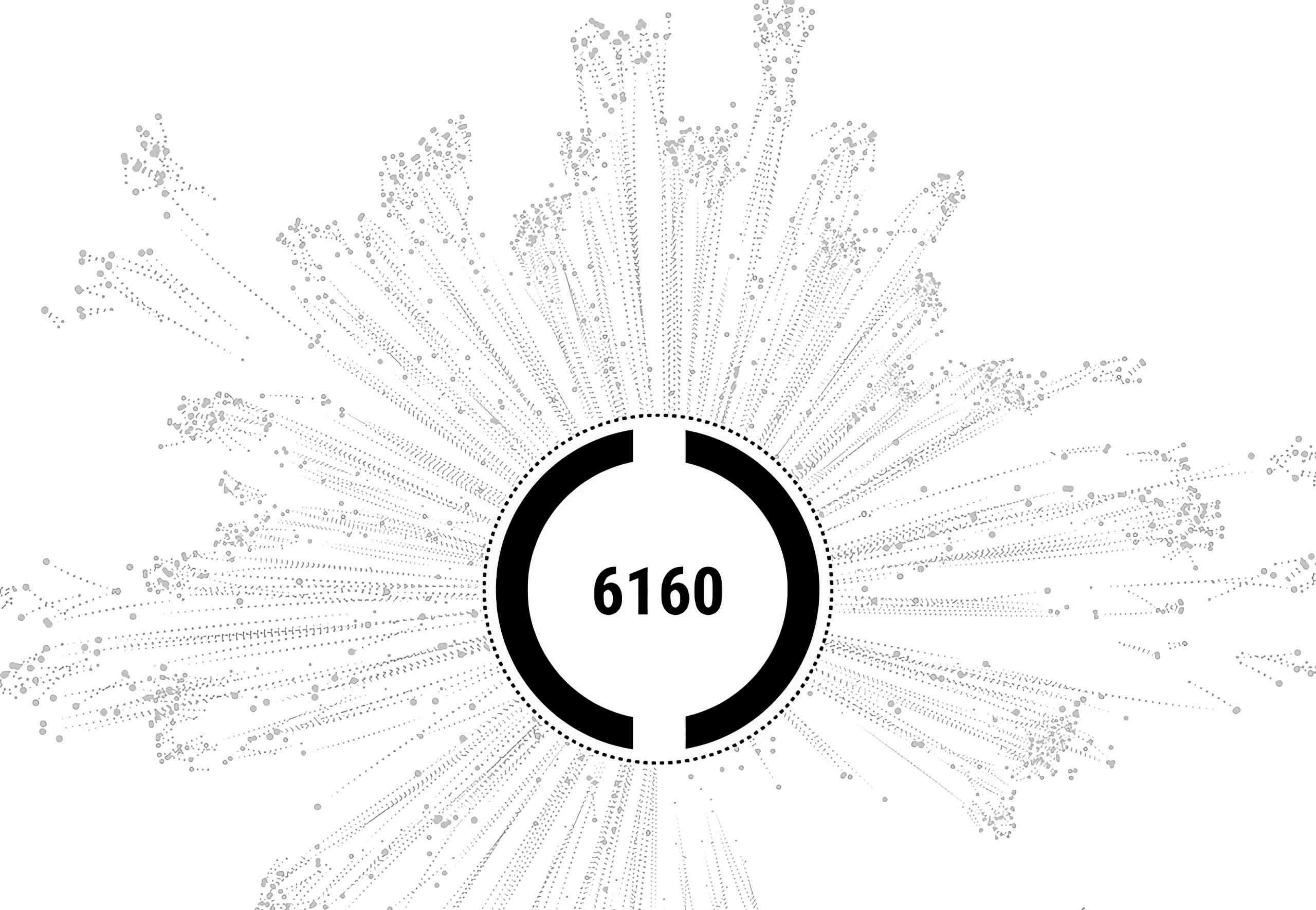


I saw the attack on the feed, but then they cut all coverage--it was a total blackout. Nothing for an entire day. Then you just showed up--back home with Obadiah's body.

What happened, Dad?

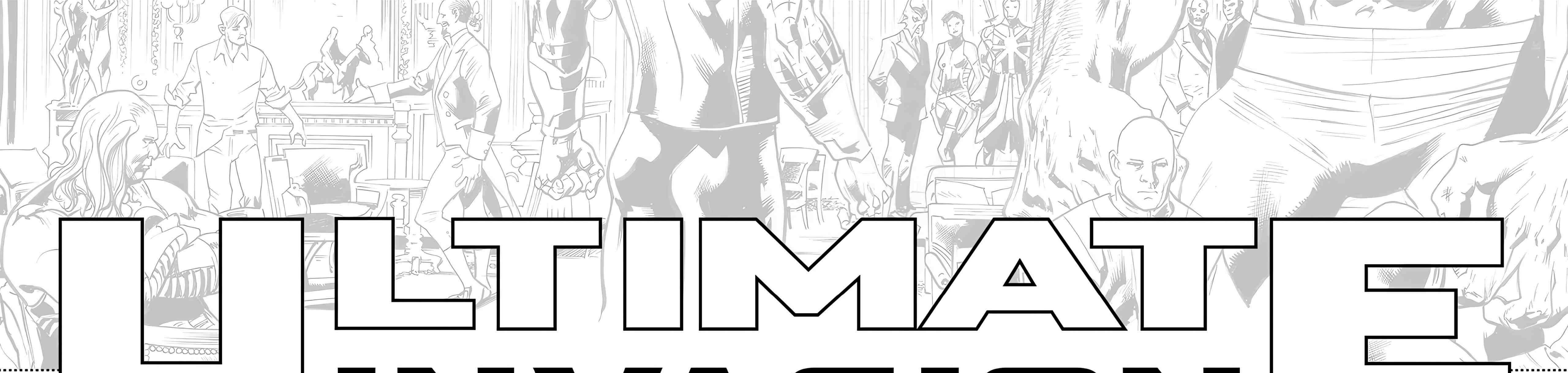


What happened in Latveria?



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**CHAPTER THREE:
“THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS”**



ULTIMATE INVASION

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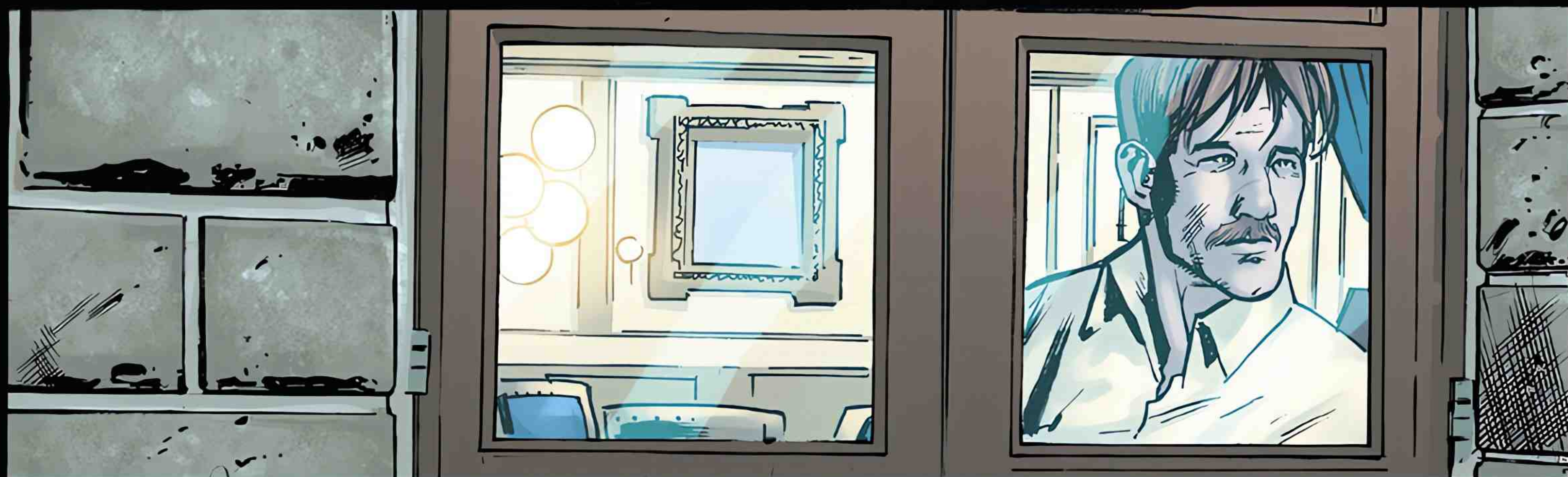
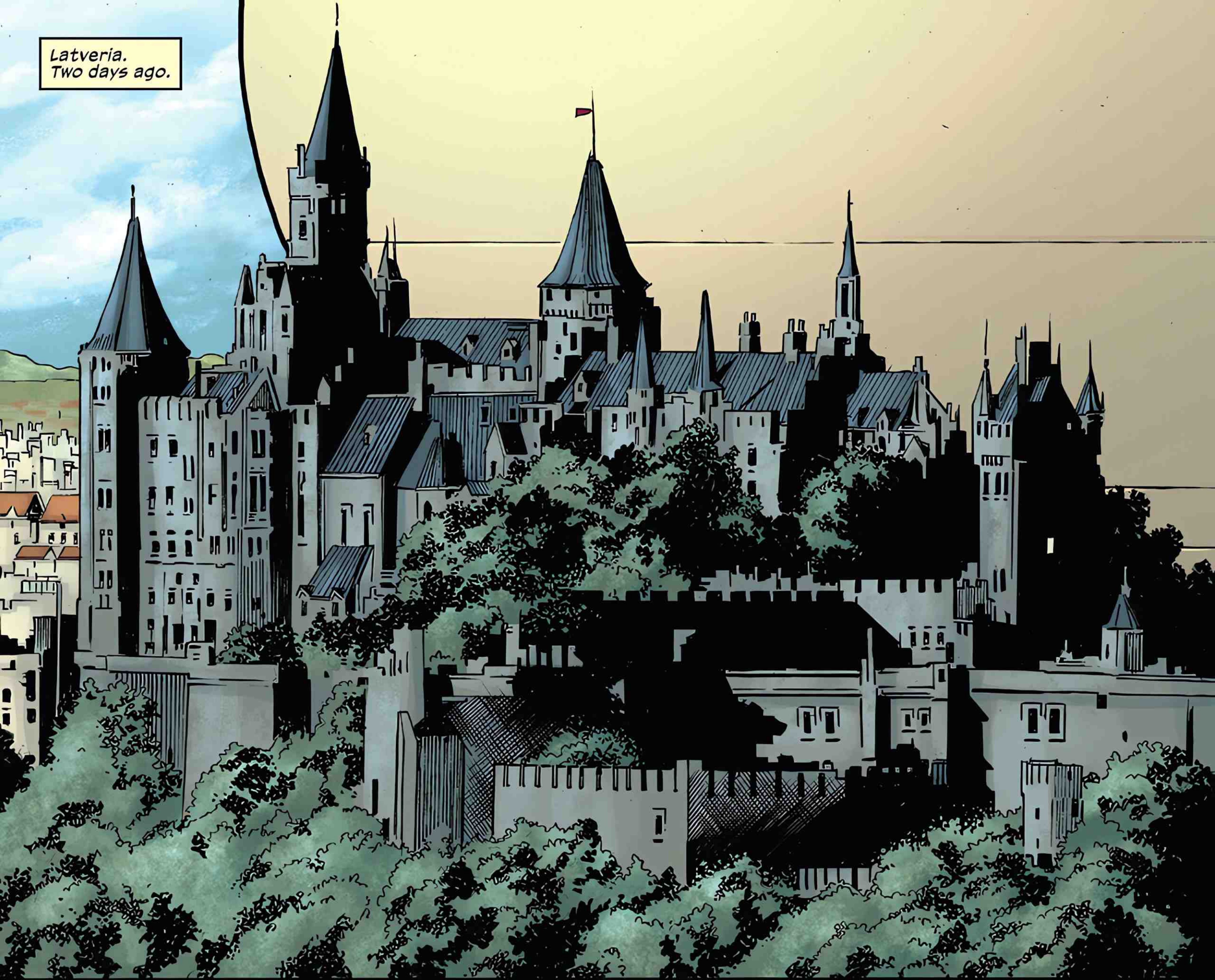
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Latveria.
Two days ago.







Thank you.
Nice to meet
you as well.

Feeling
a bit out of
place?

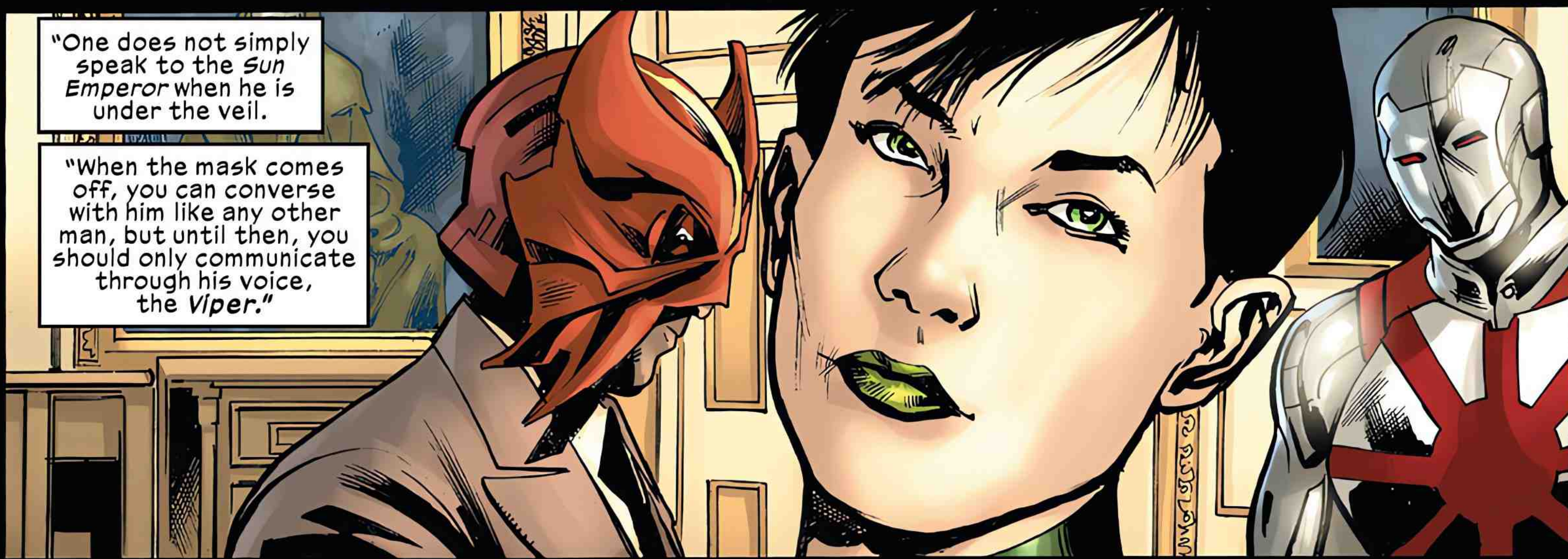


I recognize the names and
some of the faces, but as you
know, Obadiah normally handled
all of these "higher-level"
get-togethers.

I wasn't
concerned, as I'm
normally pretty good in the
room, but I have to admit,
I'm finding this one a
bit cold.

I tried to
introduce myself to
Yoshida earlier but his
samurai cut me off--and
by cut me off, I mean he
literally showed
me his blade.

Ah.
That's just
protocol,
my boy...



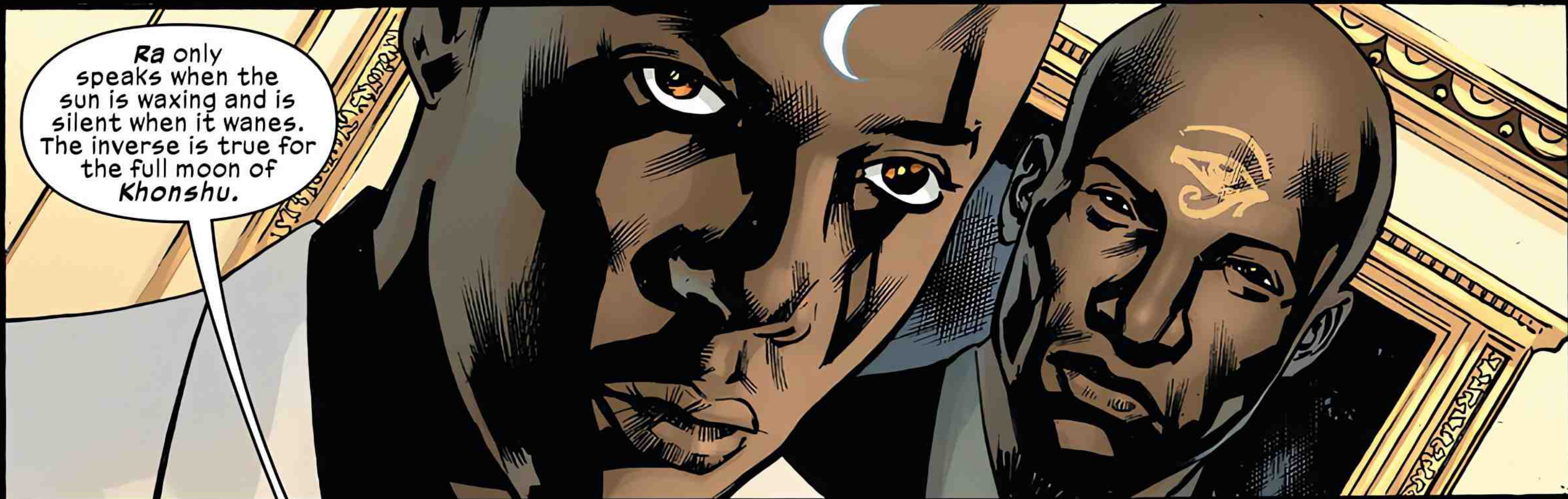
"One does not simply
speak to the *Sun*
Emperor when he is
under the veil.

"When the mask comes
off, you can converse
with him like any other
man, but until then, you
should only communicate
through his voice,
the *Viper*."



Which--between you
and me--I find a good
enough reason to
wait.

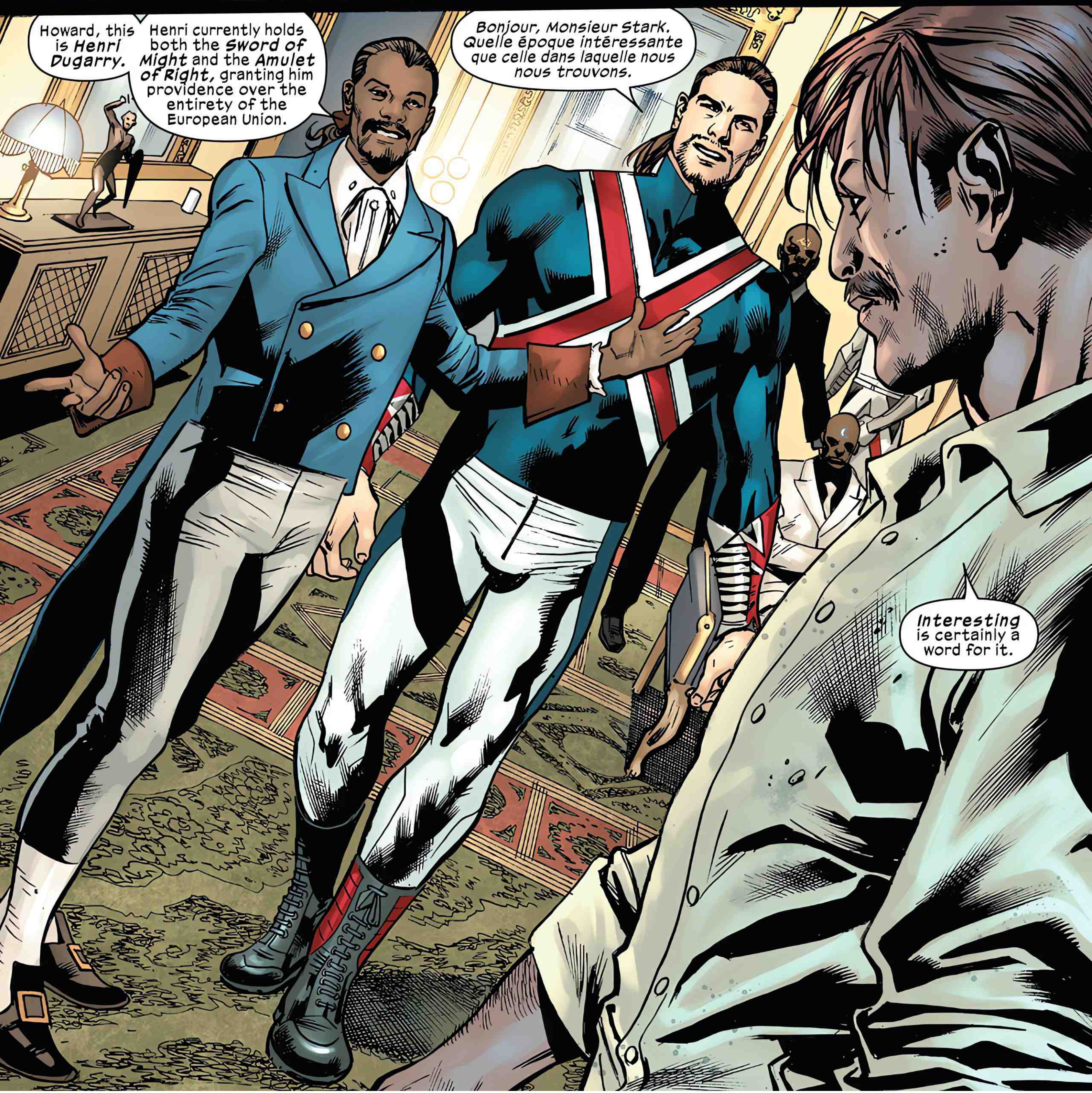
You'll find
some version of those
same conventions when
dealing with Lords of
the Upper and Lower
Kingdoms.



Ra only speaks when the sun is waxing and is silent when it wanes. The inverse is true for the full moon of Khonshu.



Ah. Here we go. Now here's a *genial* fellow.



Howard, this is **Henri Dugarry**.

Henri currently holds both the **Sword of Might** and the **Amulet of Right**, granting him providence over the entirety of the European Union.

Bonjour, Monsieur Stark. Quelle époque intéressante que celle dans laquelle nous nous trouvons.

Interesting is certainly a word for it.



And *discord* would be another.

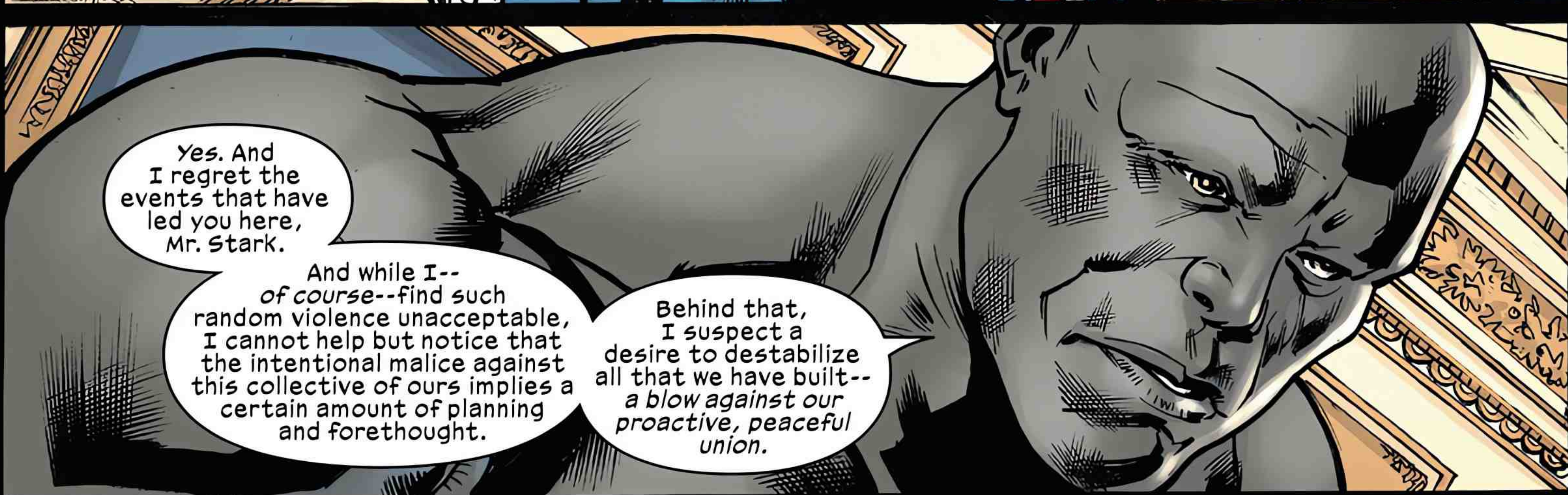
Any word yet on what the purpose or meaning was behind today's attack?



I haven't heard a thing.

Nor have I, *Monsieur* Hulk.

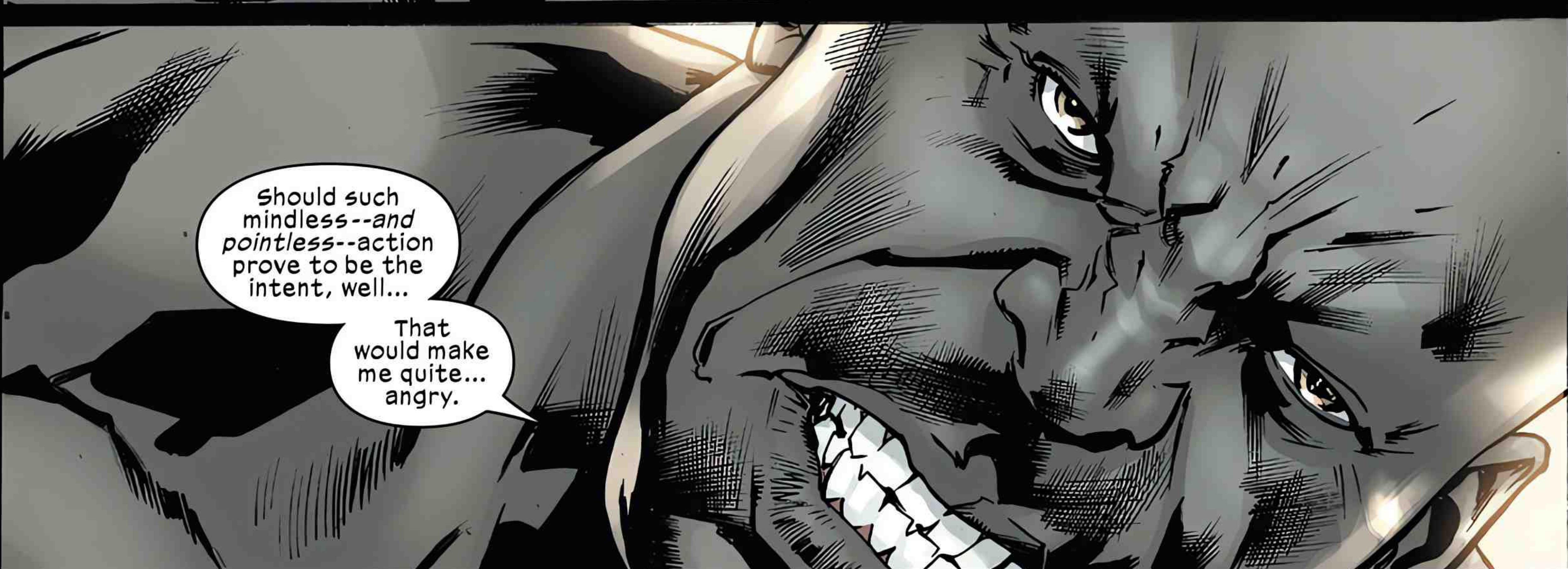
... I just got here.



Yes. And I regret the events that have led you here, Mr. Stark.

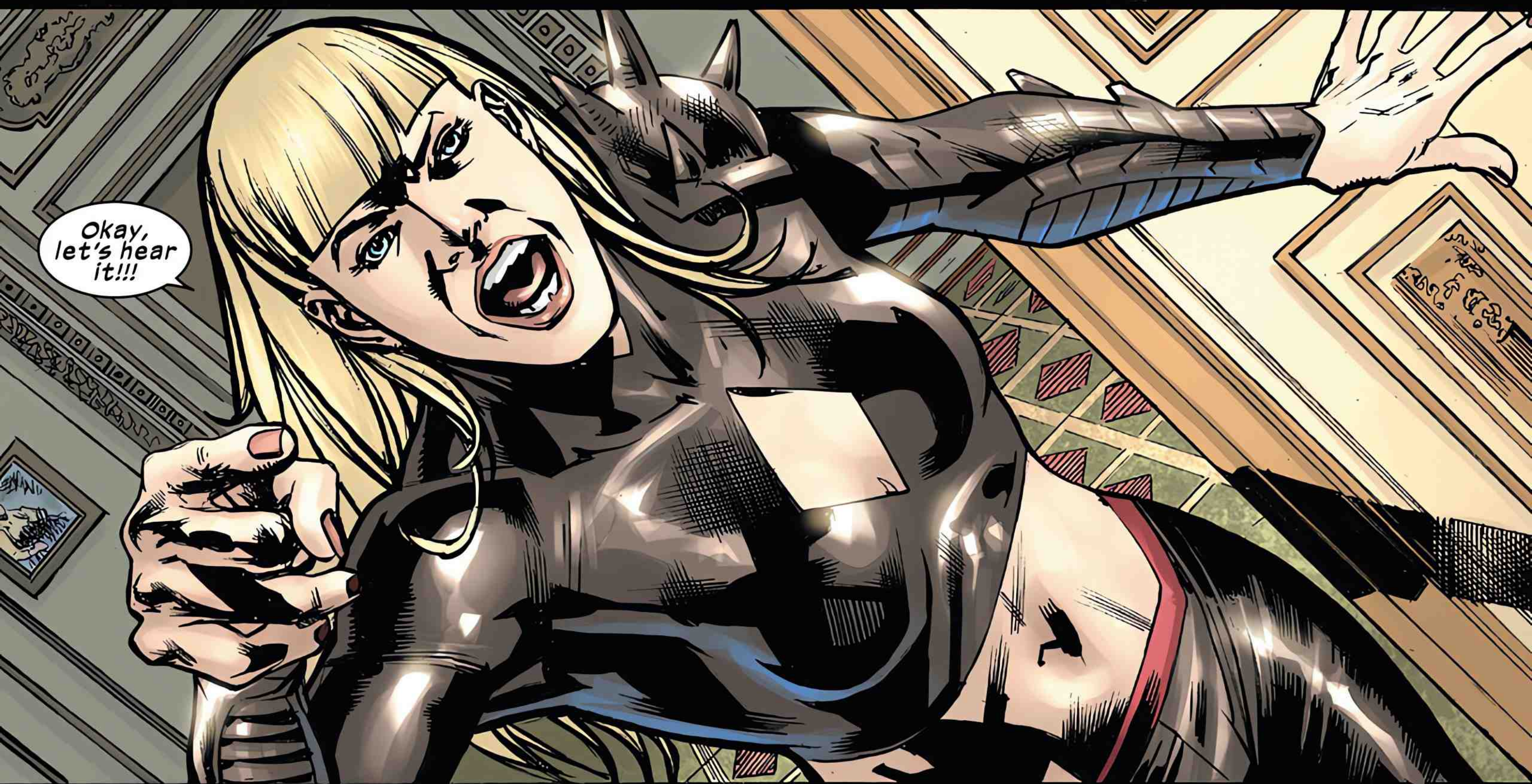
And while I-- of course--find such random violence unacceptable, I cannot help but notice that the intentional malice against this collective of ours implies a certain amount of planning and forethought.

Behind that, I suspect a desire to destabilize all that we have built-- a blow against our proactive, peaceful union.



Should such mindless--and pointless--action prove to be the intent, well...

That would make me quite... angry.



Okay,
let's hear
it!!!



Who the hell
attacked us
today?

And where--in that same hell he calls
home--is the *Maker*? We need to get
on with this--take action--and make
whoever that was regret
being born.

Une femme si
colérique.



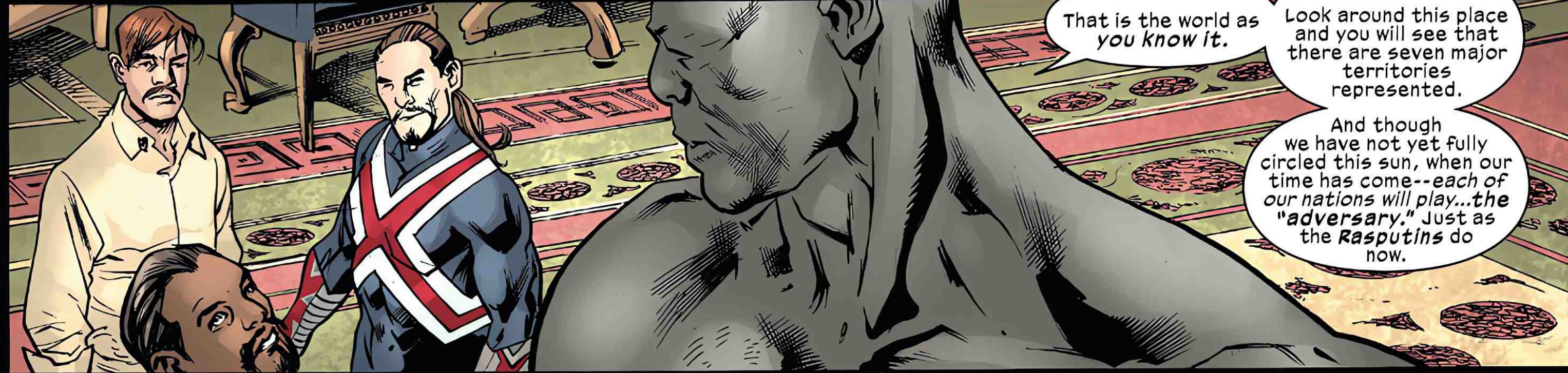
Definitely. But I'm
honestly surprised
you would meet
with her or her
companions.

Excuse-
moi?

Whatever do
you mean?



The
Rasputins.
They're the
enemy.





While inside our non-adversarial nations, we rally our citizens against this great evil, and all participate in whatever pageantry is required.

Then, at the end of a generation, *another territory*--one that has spent the previous age becoming more and more belligerent--assumes the "*rogue state*" mantle while the previous one engages in a generation of performative regret.



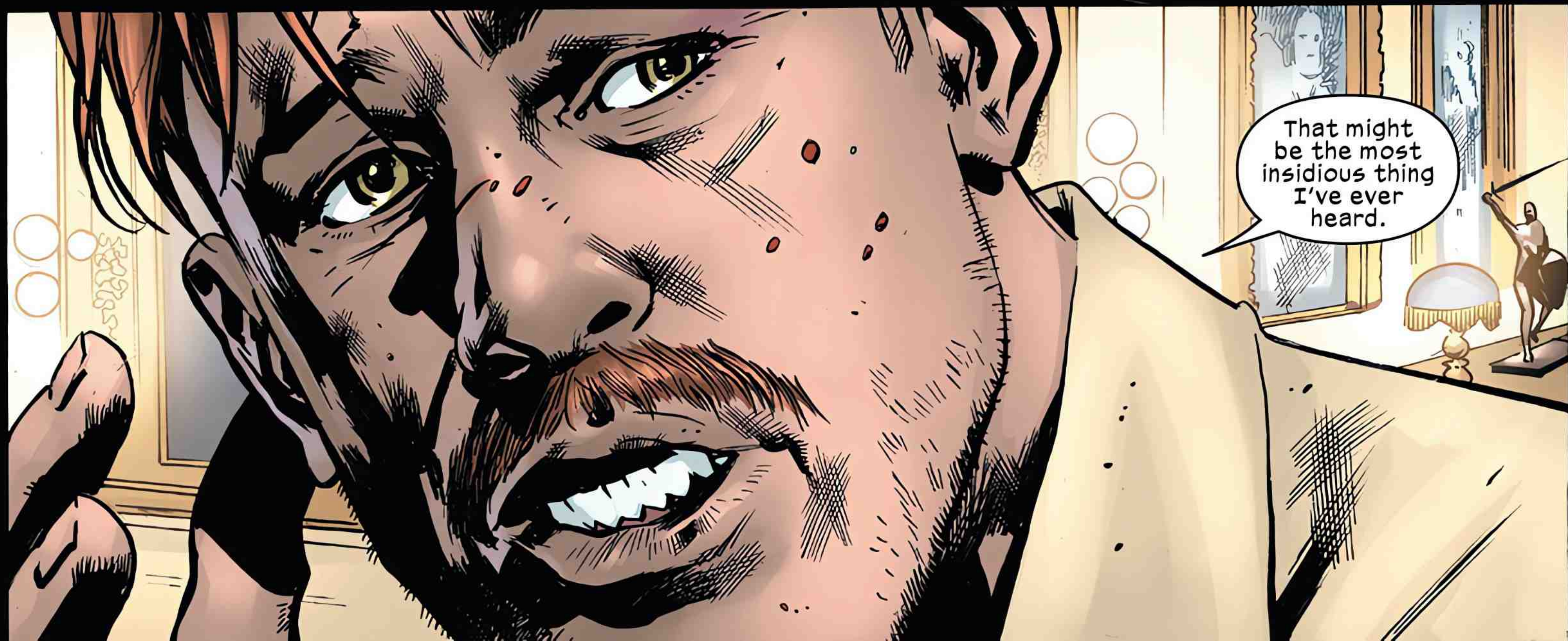
Around and around it goes. Focusing the citizens' eyes on external threats and away from any internal failures of their own territory--

--maintaining the illusion of peace in an illusory time of war.

The Maker is a pragmatic and visionary man. He believes this is good because it works. And it does work--so we accept it as the greater good.

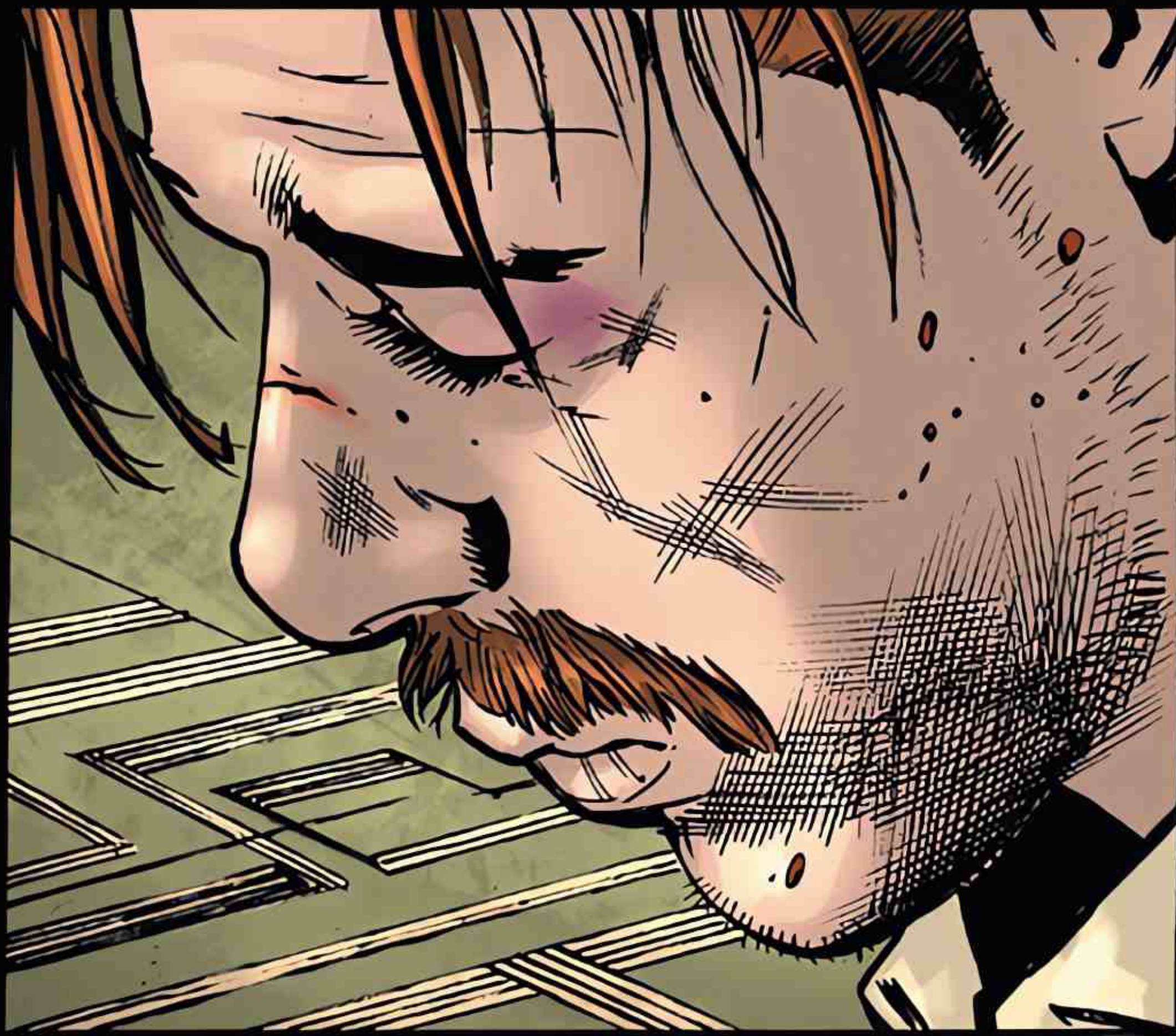


...
My god...



That might be the most insidious thing I've ever heard.





Of course, focusing on the shortcomings of mankind's nature makes it easier for those in this room to gloss over the other major reason we do this:

The little people hate us-- we giants who rule the land.



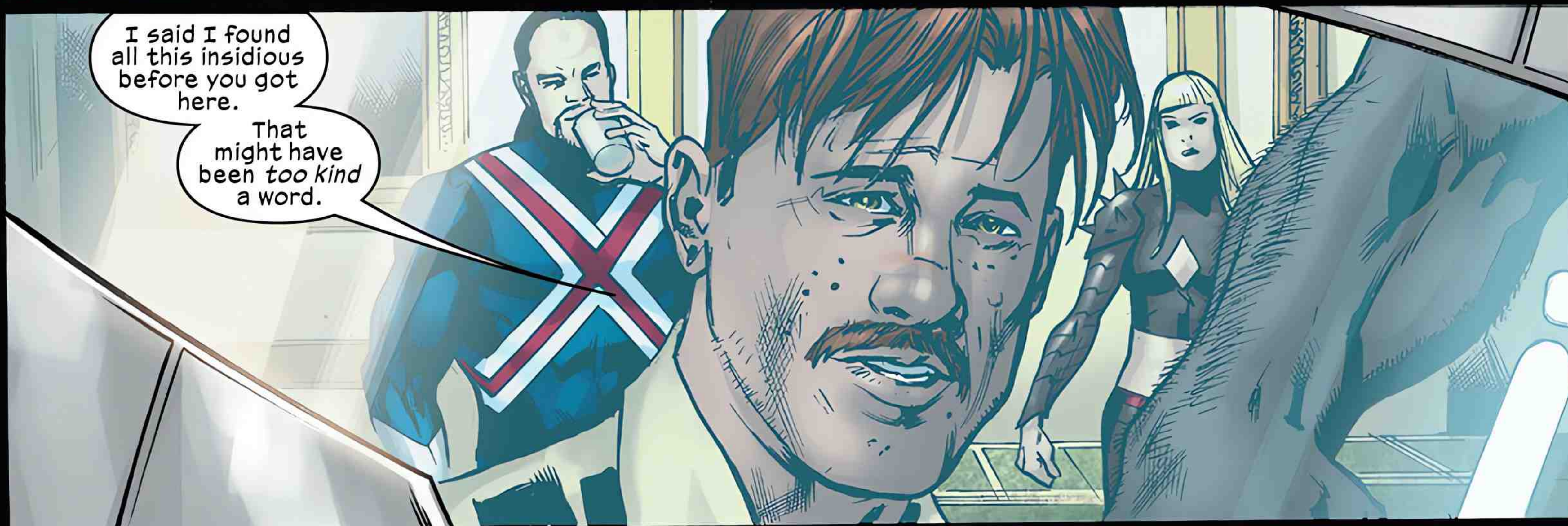
It's not how it used to be in ages gone by. Back then it wouldn't have mattered--the powerful would just roll right over the powerless if need be. We could build an empire on their bones, if we wanted...

But now they are a *collective*--instantaneously aware of just how many of them there are--and how much they uniformly hate people like us.



Which is why it's necessary to give them something else to focus on.

Which we have gotten very good at doing.



I said I found all this insidious before you got here.

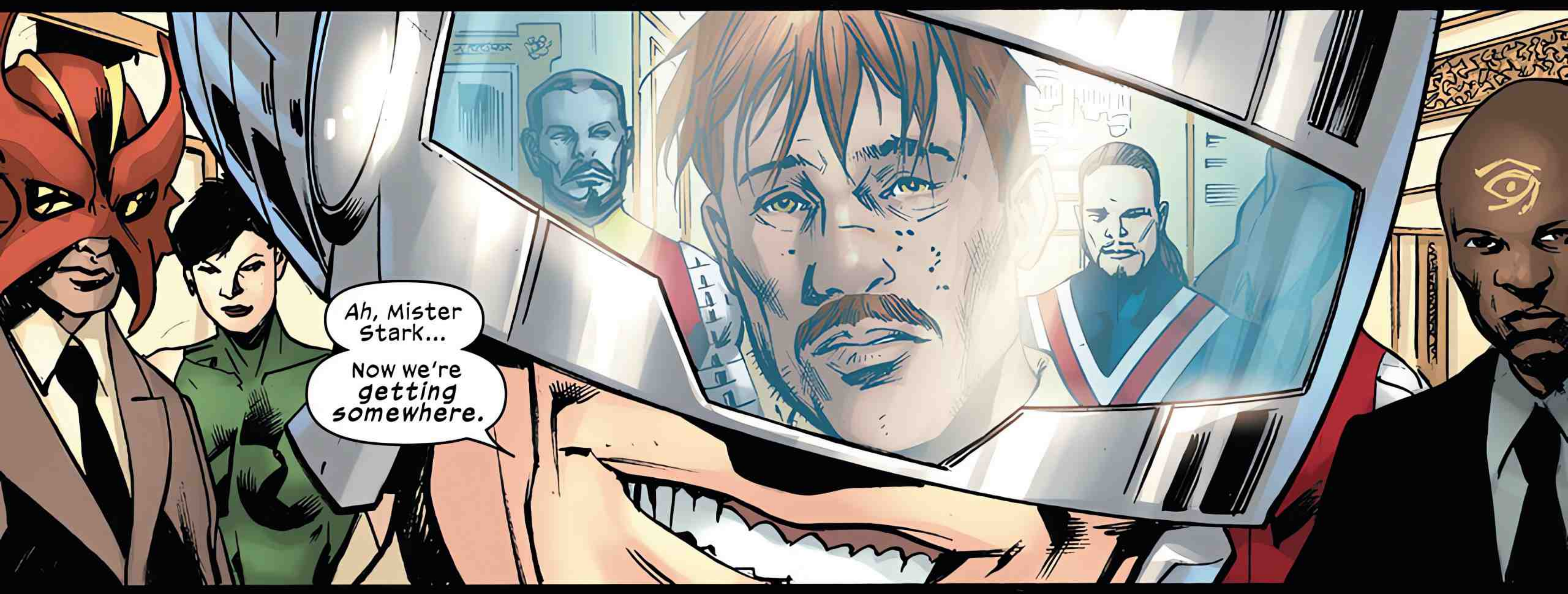
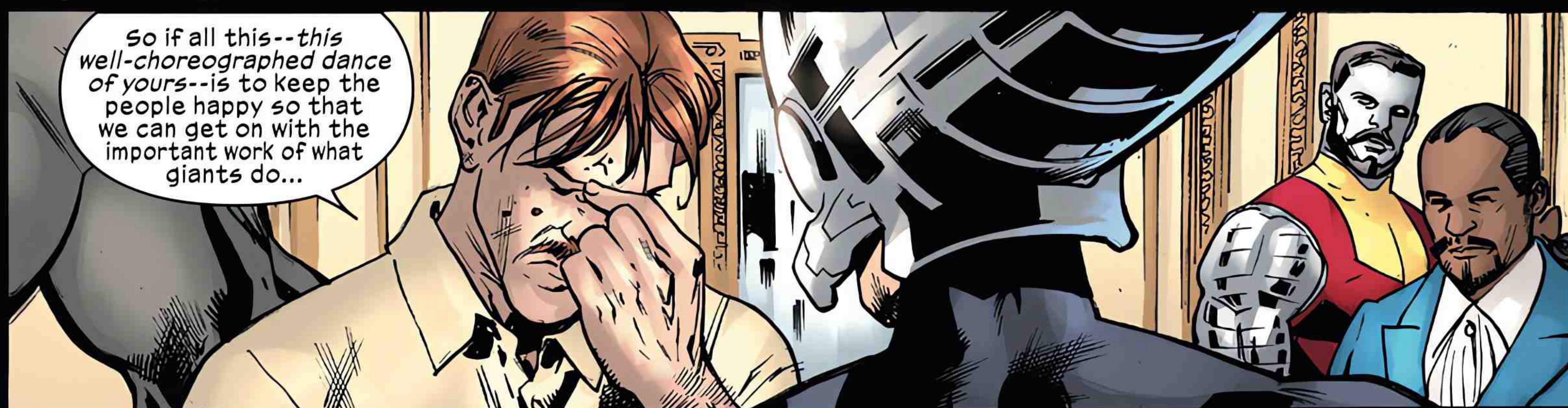
That might have been too kind a word.



Choose whatever word you wish. It won't change who they are and who you are...

Because you, Howard Stark--rich, brilliant and powerful--

--are one of us.



THE WORLD

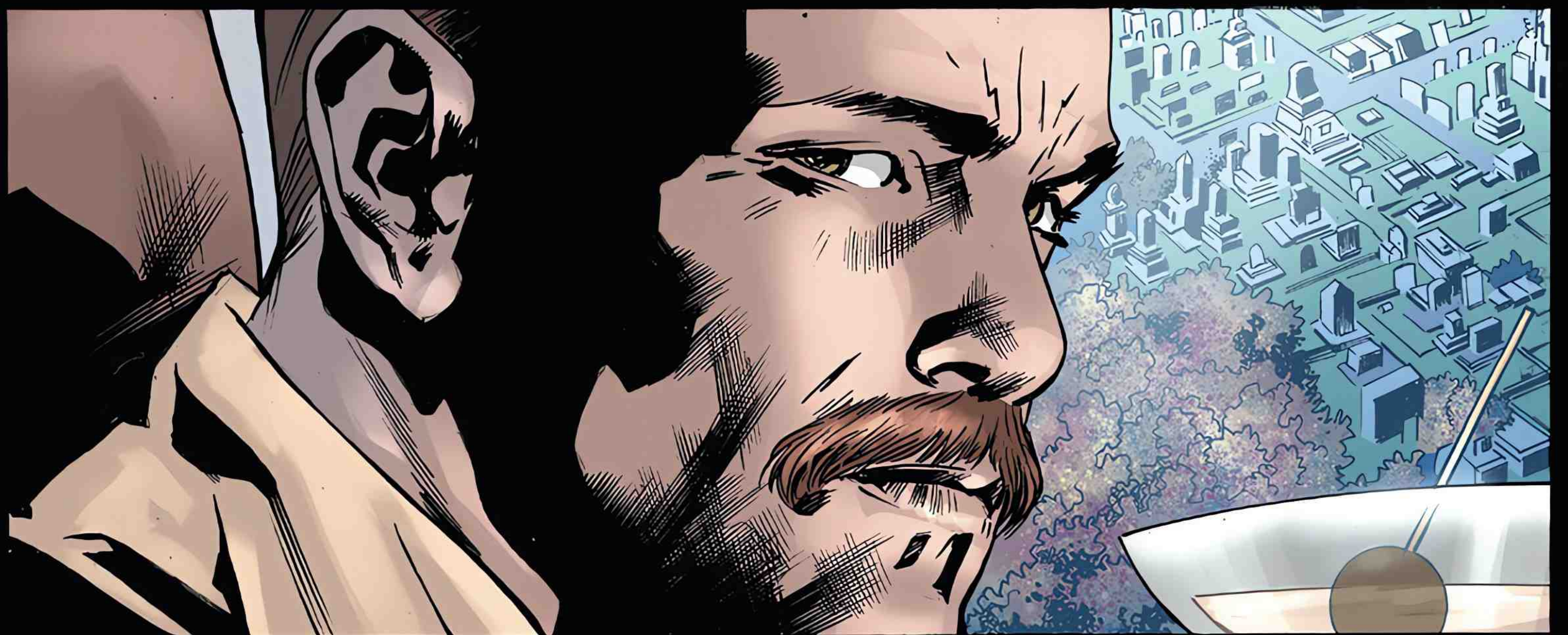
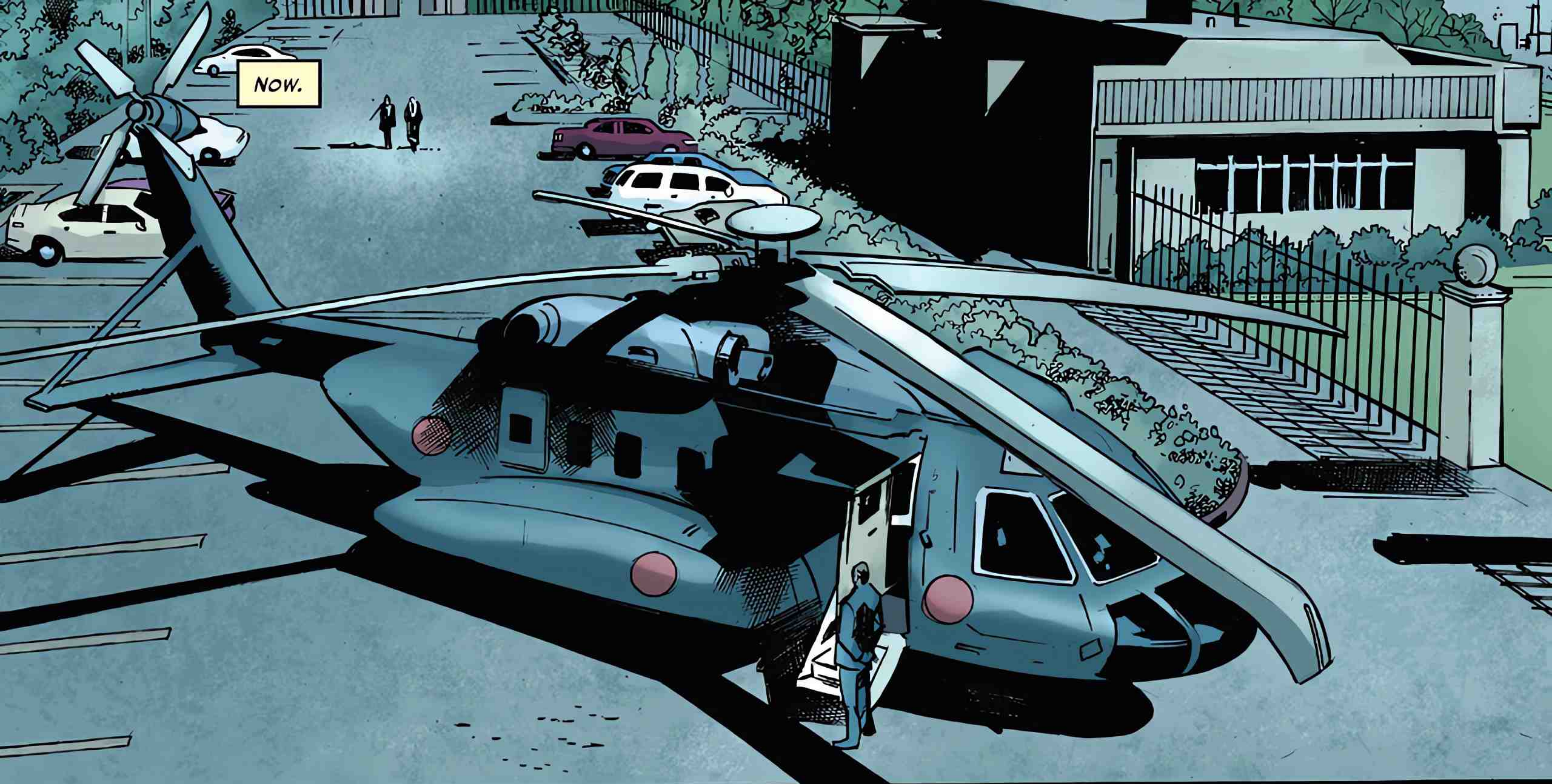


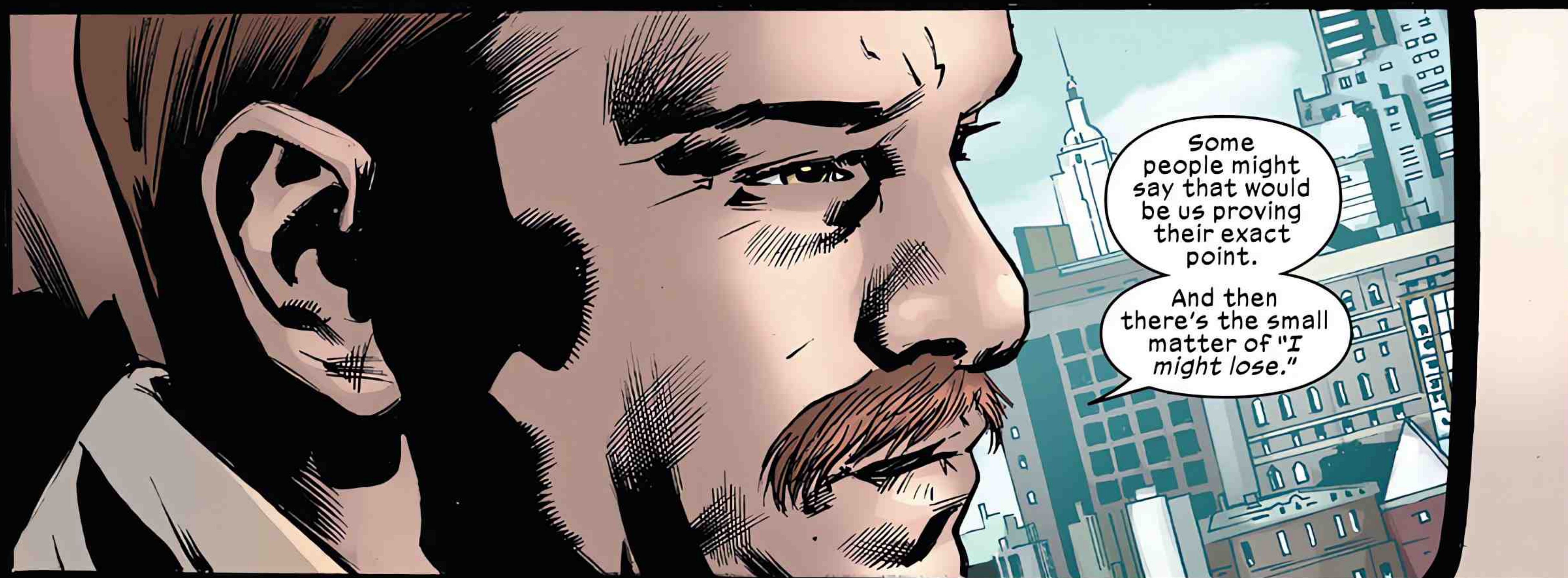
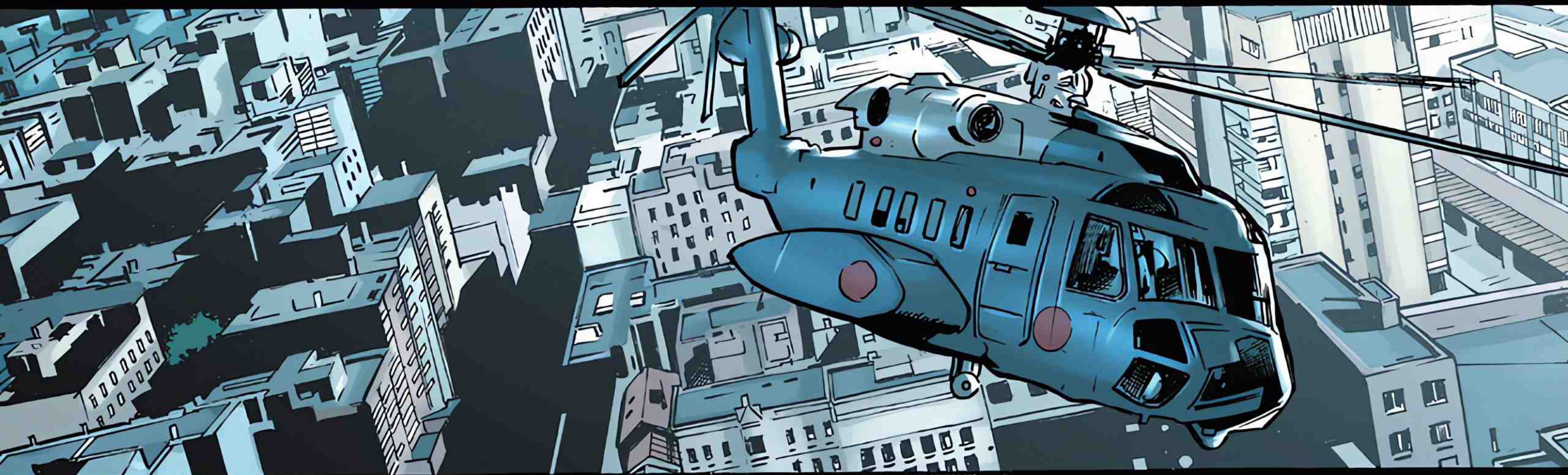
THE WORLD

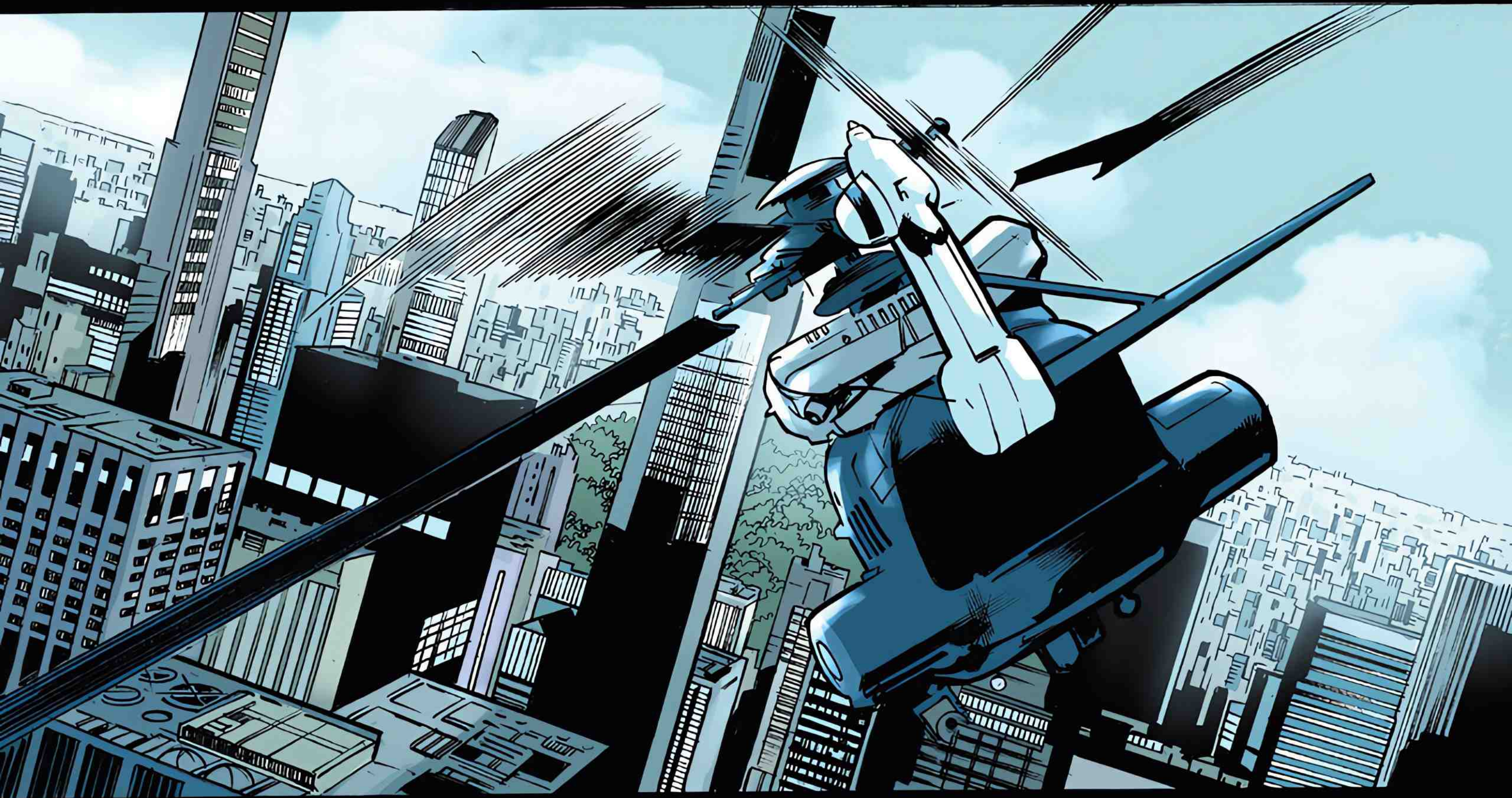
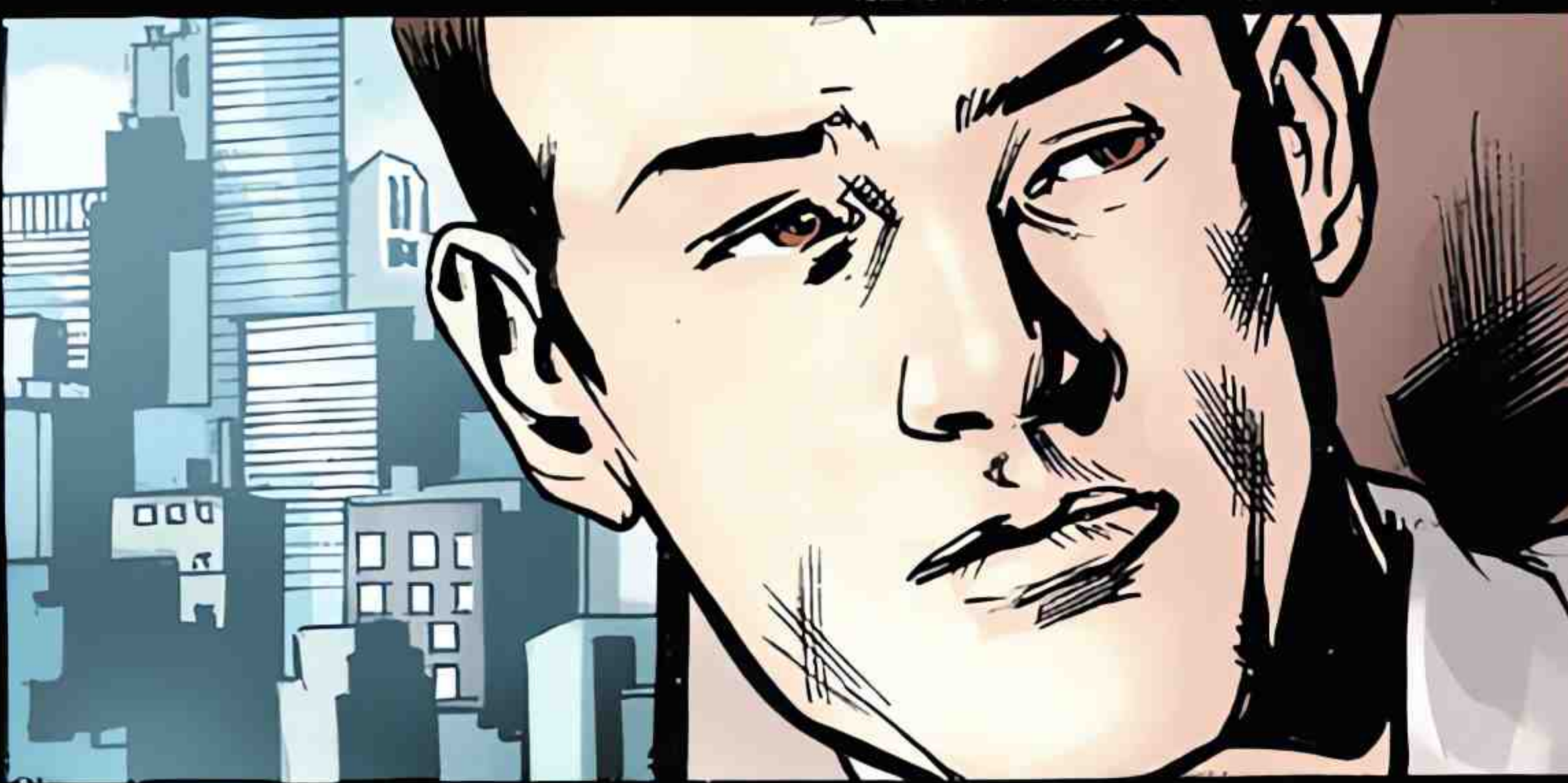
AS REMADE BY THE MAKER

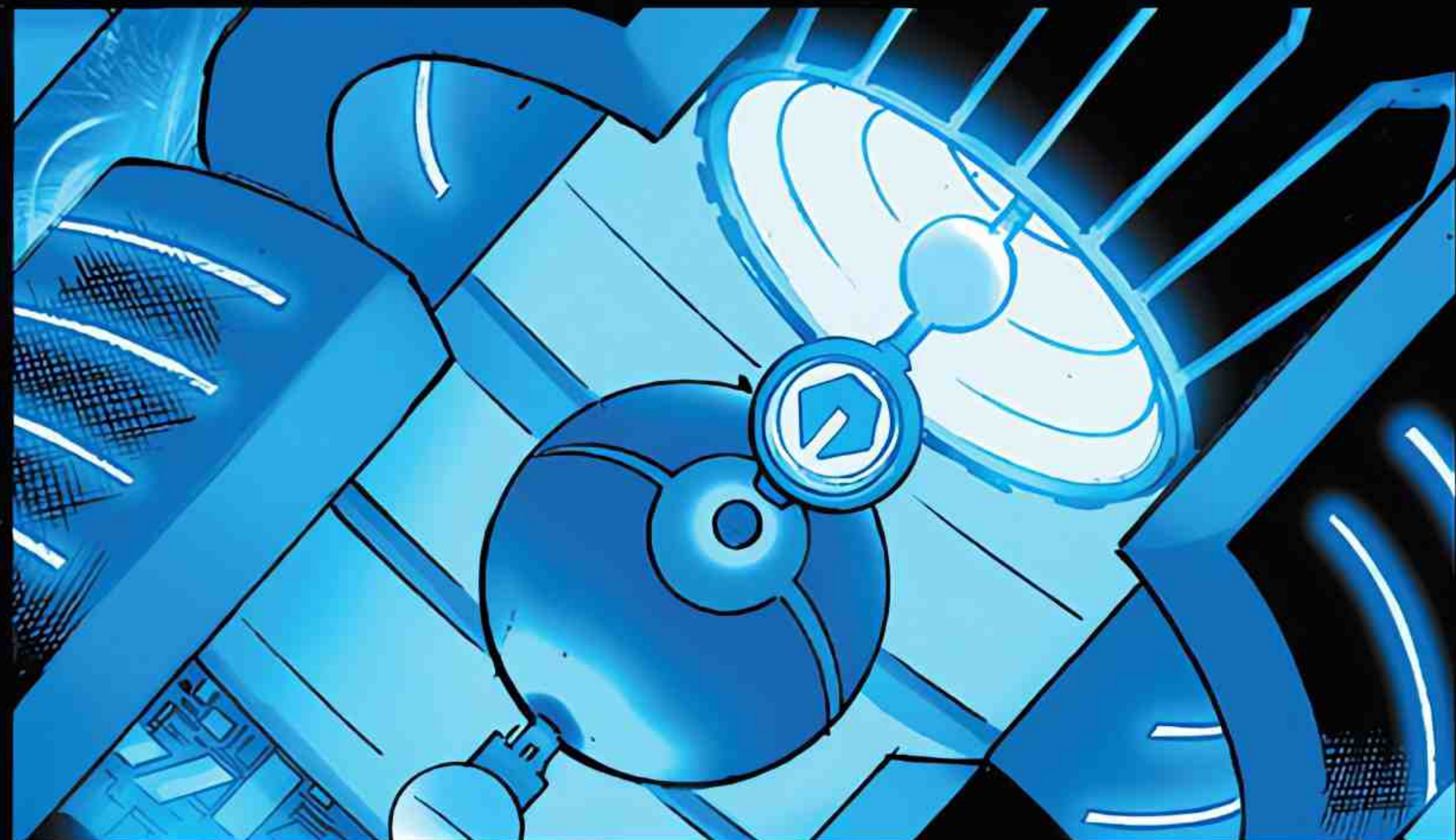
- THE NORTH AMERICAN UNION
- REGIONAL SUBSIDIARIES
- THE SOCIETY OF SOUTH AMERICA
- REGIONAL CLUBS
- FRACTIONAL CULTURES
- THE EUROPEAN COALITION
- REGIONAL GOVERNORS
- FIEFDOMS
- THE CITY
- LATVERIAN TERRITORIES
- THE UPPER AND LOWER KINGDOMS
- REGIONAL DYNASTIES
- LOCAL TEMPLES
- THE EURASIAN REPUBLIC
- REGIONAL DIRECTORS
- LOCAL SCHOOLS
- THE CHILDREN OF ETERNAL LIGHT
- THE SHADOWS OF THE IMMORTAL HAND
- HI NO KUNI ("LAND OF FIRE")
- DAIMYOS
- UNDISCOVERED TERRITORY

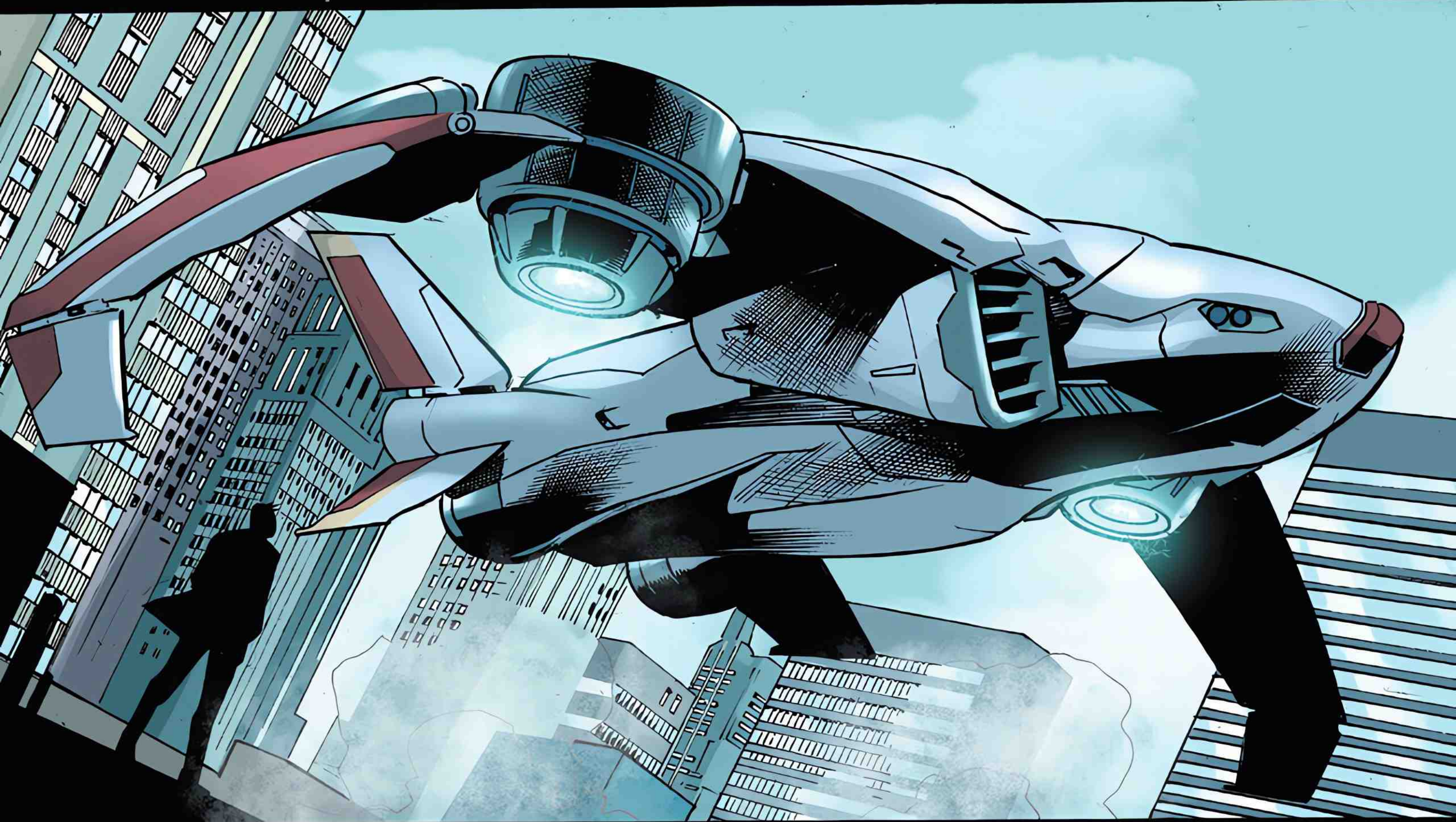
1963-2023













The City.
One day ago.



Where
are we?

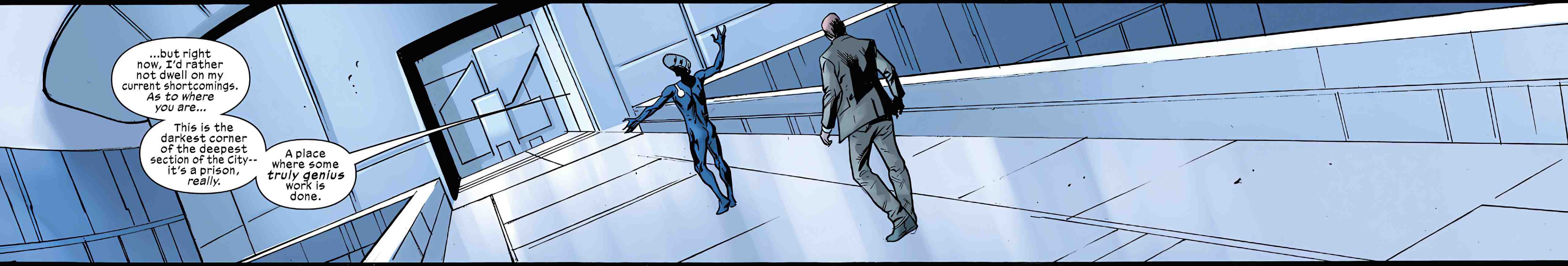


You've never been
inside the City,
correct?

You know
I haven't.



Actually,
I don't know
that...



...but right now, I'd rather not dwell on my current shortcomings. As to where you are...

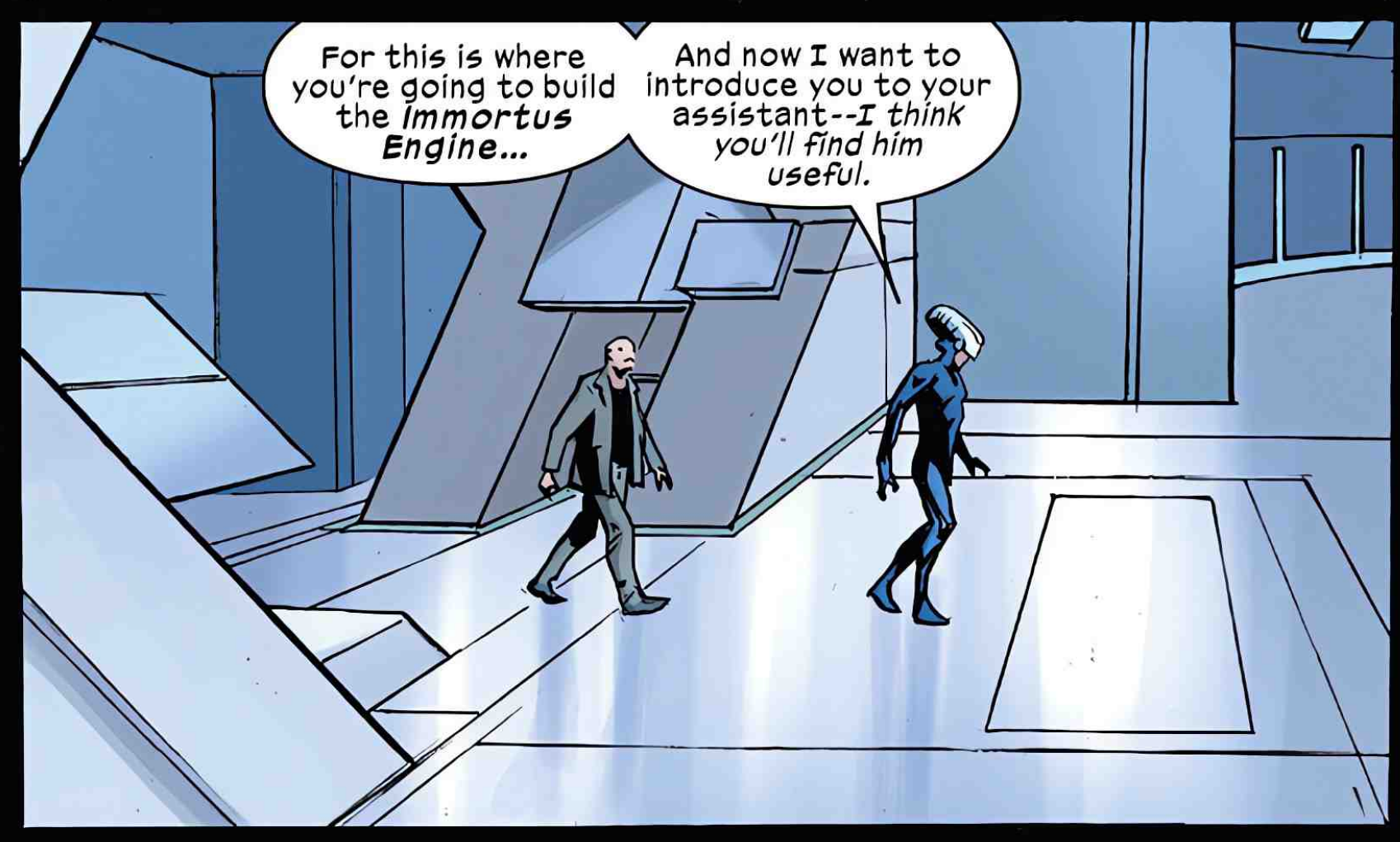
This is the darkest corner of the deepest section of the City-- it's a prison, really.

A place where some truly genius work is done.



It's also where all my nightmares reside.

But for now, however, it will serve as your lab.



For this is where you're going to build the *Immortus Engine*...

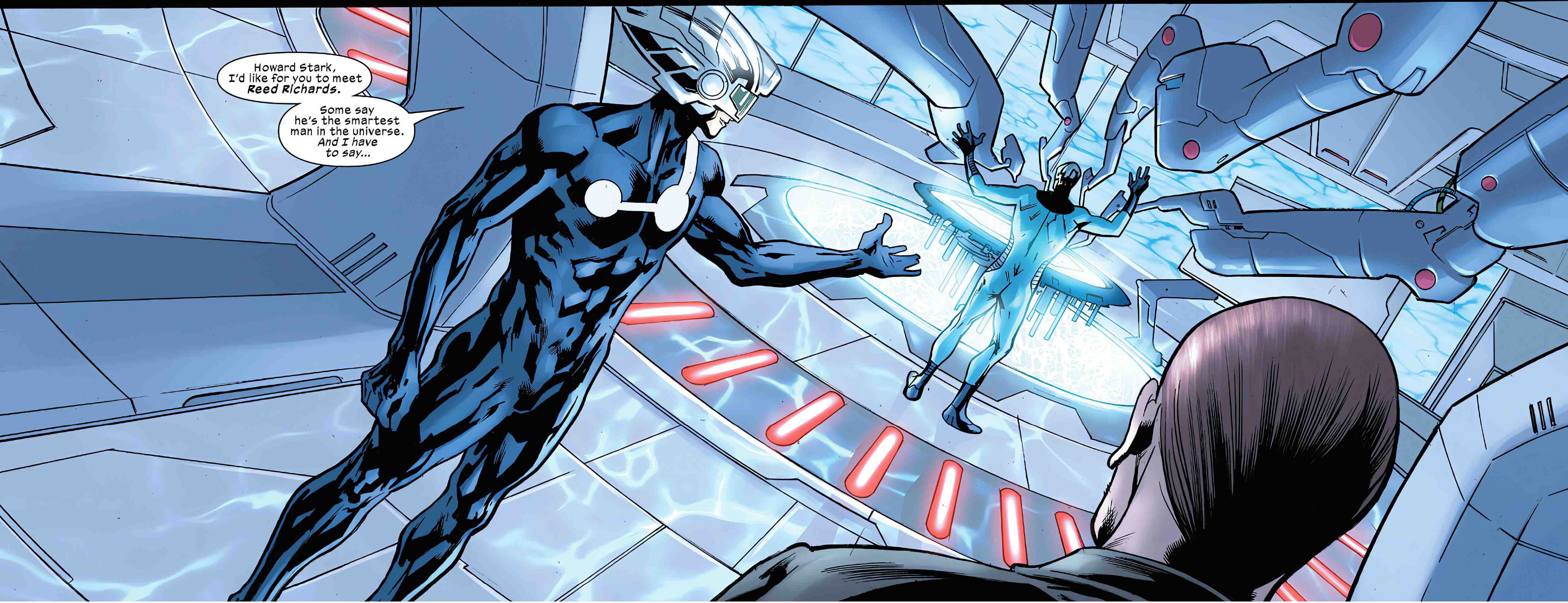
And now I want to introduce you to your assistant--I think you'll find him useful.



I work alone.



No one works alone. We carry the ghosts of our successes and failures--who we *could have been*, who we *should have been*--and they haunt us for all our days.



Howard Stark, I'd like for you to meet *Reed Richards*.

Some say he's the smartest man in the universe. And I have to say...

...I do agree.

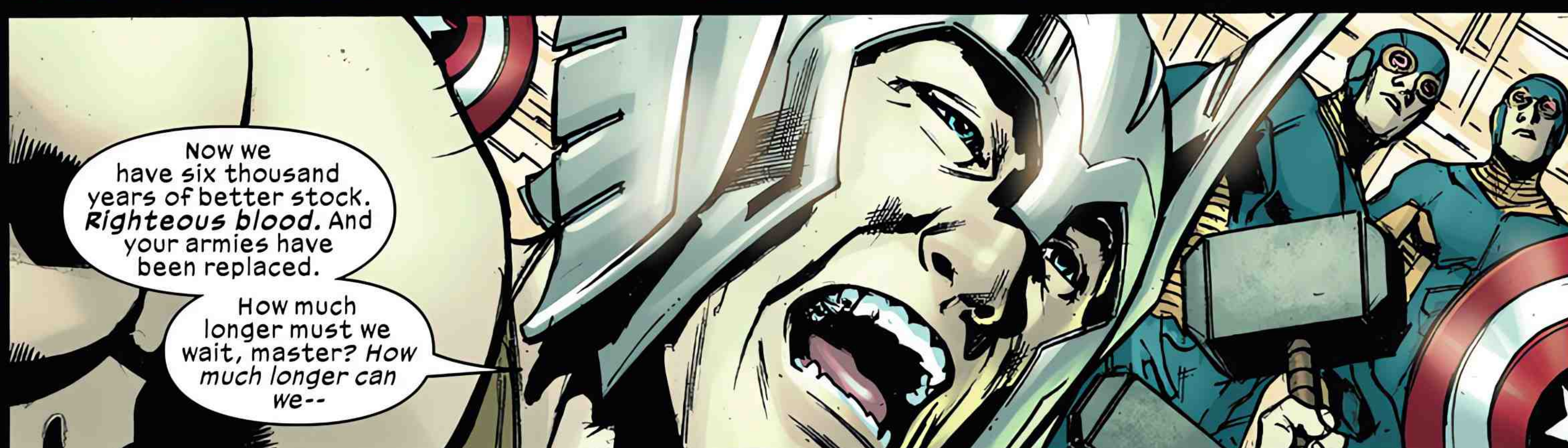
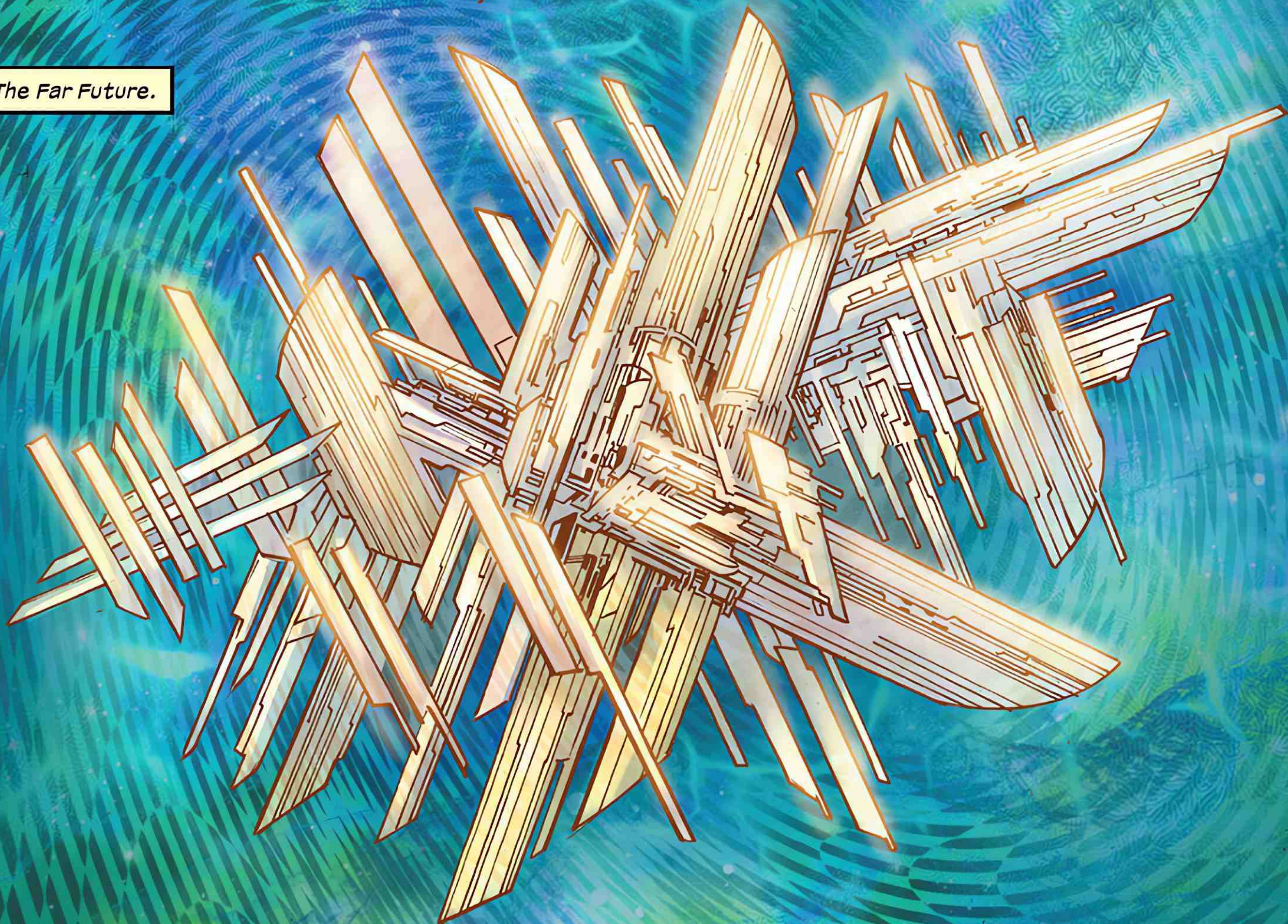


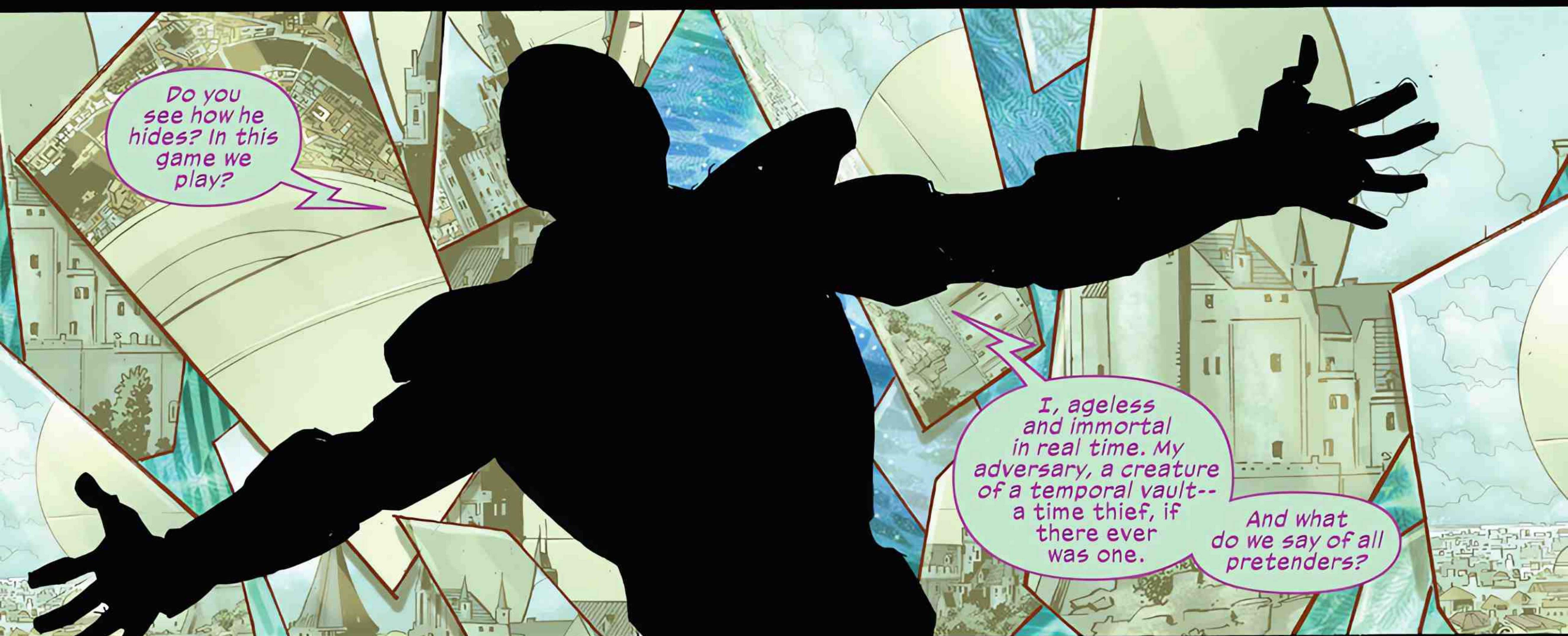


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EPILOGUE:
“ALL TOMORROW’S ARMIES”

The Far Future.





Do you see how he hides? In this game we play?

I, ageless and immortal in real time. My adversary, a creature of a temporal vault-- a time thief, if there ever was one.

And what do we say of all pretenders?



Their time will come.



Tell me of my legions.



They are infinite. They are immortal.

They are ready to die.



This pleases me.

It makes me eager.



I have heard your cries...I have heard you ask me...



"Kang, is it time?"

And so
I tell you
truly...

The
time is
now.



TO BE CONCLUDED...